THE VOICE OF THE LORD

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BOOK - ROOM 'HEBRON'

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FOREWORD

Having had the privilege of a personal friendship with the author for many years, I know that it is from experience that he is speaking in this little booklet.

When he says: "Once we learn the secret of hearing the Voice of God, all our questions, no matter how difficult they are, are answered; and our problems, however complicated, are solved . . . the Lord *does* speak!", we realize he is looking back down the years to those lessons he has learned in his own daily walk with God, to the reality of getting through to God in prayer, and to the joy of solved problems and answered petitions. His sincere longing is to share the secret with his readers; and in the pages of this little book we can learn that secret of hearing God's Voice —how to listen and how to get answers.

May God give us each one listening hearts, ready and glad to pay the cost by total obedience.

C. D.

Chapter 1

HEAR YE HIM

I want you to note that small fragment in Matt. 3:17: *the Voice from heaven, saying: This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.*" It must have been a very unique and wonderful experience for those who heard that Voice that day.

John the Baptist came into the world to prepare the way for the Lord Jesus Christ. He began preaching repentance in the wilderness, but the message was not an easy one for the people to accept. People came from far places to hear him, and it was not a message to please them that he preached, but a message with the authority of the living God. He made no distinction when he said: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Those who heard the message repented of their sins and confessed them and were baptised. Some may have thought that they would receive some sort of blessing by being baptised by such a great prophet. Some of those who came to be baptised were even of the leaders of the nation, and looking at them John exclaimed, "Oh generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth fruit, therefore, mete for repentance." He gave the message to all the people, but only a certain number of them responded and were baptised of him.

One day the Lord Jesus Christ Himself came to be baptised. The Scripture says in John's Gospel, that, till

that day, John the Baptist did not himself know who the Lord Jesus really was (John 1:31). Our Lord Jesus Christ came very quietly among the crowd and requested John the Baptist to baptise him. John of course knew something about Jesus naturally, being his cousin, but he did not know that He was the Messiah. When John saw the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descend on Jesus Christ as a dove, then he knew for certain who He was. The next day, he declared: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

This tells us that it was only when the Voice of God spoke that John knew who Jesus was. Unless you also hear the Voice of God you will never know who God is. You may have attended many meetings, you may know much of the Bible, and you may have made many sacrifices, but unless you hear the Voice of God, all these things are of no value to you spiritually.

The Lord did not begin His ministry by doing miracles. Till that day He had not performed a single miracle, nor had He preached a single sermon. It was only after the Voice of God declared His identity that John understood and declared who Jesus was.

If you want to enjoy the grace of God, and to understand His power in fulness, and to know the mind of God every day, then learn the secret of hearing His still small Voice every day and many times during the day. God does speak, the living and the mighty God, and He wants us to hear His voice and listen to Him. May we all learn this secret. We must hear the Voice of God every day saying to us: 'This is the way, walk ye in it' (Isa. 30:21). How simple these words are. When you are about to take a wrong turning, either to the right or to the left, there comes that still small Voice saying: 'Don't go this way, don't go that way; there is some danger there.' In this way all of us can be guided daily

in the right path.

As long as we are in the world all of us have to face temptation. It does not matter who you are, where you are, or what you are doing. As human beings we have to face many temptations and difficult situations and troubles of one kind or another. But when we can hear the Voice of God clearly we can meet these situations victoriously.

God shows us in His Word, how from the very beginning of our spiritual life we must learn to hear His voice. Study Exod: 19:19; 20:1, 2. In Ezek. 1:24, we read of the 'Voice of the Almighty'; in Ezek. 10:25 of the 'Voice of the Almighty God, when He speaketh'; in I Kings 19:12, of 'the still small Voice'.

You may remember the story in I Kings 18, how when Elijah the mighty man of God prayed, the heaven opened and the fire came down (I Kings 18:38).

In the beginning of chapter 19, the wicked queen threatened to kill Elijah, so Elijah may have thought that God would surely punish Jezebel. He went and sat under the juniper tree, for he was angry with God for failing to punish her. That is how we behave sometimes. That is how we misunderstand God and begin to doubt Him. But God's ways are not our ways; they are higher than our ways. He will not work in our way. Elijah perhaps thought God was not doing His duty because He did not punish Jezebel, so he told the Lord: "Lord, from today onwards I am not going to be your prophet." Now, if you are in Government service you have to give three months' notice if you wish to resign, but Elijah gave just one day's notice! "Take away Your prophetship from me from today," he said in effect, "I am not going to speak in Your Name from today. You have gone to sleep and are not doing Your job!"

Many a time we also think the same. We want to

dictate to God. But God was not sleeping! He took Elijah to the mountain-top and there dealt with him in a wonderful way. First there was a very strong wind; but God was not in the wind. Then came the earthquake which shook the mountain, but Scripture says that God was not in the earthquake. Then there came fire, but God was not in the fire. After that, there came a still small Voice and God spoke to Elijah and told him clearly where and when and how He would judge Jezebel. At the same time He revealed to him many other things about coming events.

Through these many references from the Bible we see God speaking. God does speak, and if you believe in God, you must listen when He speaks. He is not something abstract. He is a person. We can know Him, hear Him, be led of Him, and know Him more intimately than we know anybody else. You may have been living with friends for many years and yet do not know them fully. You may live with your wife and children for many years and yet you dare not tell them everything. There are certain thoughts which we cannot share with others; but we can speak to God freely and tell Him every thought. We can go to Him at any time, anywhere, and hear His voice.

Once, only prophets or high priests were able to hear the Voice of God. If others wanted to hear what God had to say, they had first to go to either a prophet or the high priest. Whenever David was in trouble he had to send for the high priest Zadok to help him to hear the Voice of God. To help man to hear God's Voice Jesus Christ came into the world, and for this reason, at the very beginning of His ministry, the Holy Spirit came upon Him and God spoke from Heaven.

In His baptism our Lord was prophesying how He must die, be buried and rise again. This He proclaimed

in this symbolic way at the very beginning of His ministry. In Mark 8:31, 9:31, He talks of this in a more clear and specific way, and even before His crucifixion, prophesied His death. In baptism He spoke symbolically that He must give His life for sinners and conquer death. Then the heavens opened and God's Voice was heard. Those who know the Lord Jesus by experience see the heaven open everyday; they claim God's grace, mercy, love and power day by day; and they have the gift of the Holy Spirit to lead them, help them and teach them, because mysteries and spiritual truths cannot be understood by ordinary wisdom.

You too can hear the Voice of God everyday according to your need, and through the inward Voice can know exactly what God expects of you, and wants you to do.

The next question is, how can anyone of us hear God's Voice clearly and definitely every day? The answer is in the same chapter, Matt. 3:2 'Repent ye!' That was the first message declared boldly and with authority by John the Baptist. The same message was given by the Lord Jesus Christ on the day of His baptism (Matt. 4:17). In Greek the word 'repentance' means 'right about turn'. First I look straight ahead; then I turn my back and face the other way. That is called repentance.

As sinners we face the devil with our backs towards God, because we get much more pleasure in obeying Satan than God. By hearing the word of God and knowing the result of sin, we repent and turn our back to the devil and our face towards God. But in many cases it is only half-repentance, or two-thirds repentance! Men want both masters! When they are in trouble they want God, otherwise they want to serve the devil. Repentance is not repentance unless it is full and complete. We require the grace and help of God to

repent and turn our back on the devil.

We are told in the same chapter (verses 13 and 14) how John was surprised to see Jesus coming to Him. Unless you humble yourself, you will not understand the meaning of God's kingdom. Even though Jesus had much more power and authority than John the Baptist, He humbled Himself for your sake and mine, and went to John to be baptised. John exclaims, "I have need to be baptised of Thee. Comest Thou to me?" The Lord was saying in a symbolic manner that humility is the secret of divine favour. The more we humble ourselves the more we will be exalted (Matt. 23:12). Not only should we repent of our sins with humility and meekness but we must confess from our hearts, "Lord, I am no better than my neighbour. Even though I occupy a high position on earth, in Thy sight I am a sinner; a great sinner. I can see nothing in me but corruption and defilement.".

That is quite true. In spite of all our education and culture, we get defiled by our thoughts and deeds. God's word says very clearly that 'the heart of man is desperately wicked'. No matter how cultured we are, we cannot change our inward nature. As we become older we become more wicked, haughty, proud and deceptive. Our freedom lies in humility. Only then can we be completely delivered from our sinful nature through Christ.

Our Lord prophesied three things by His baptism. In Rom. 6, baptism speaks of death, burial and resurrection; a three-fold inward change which is expressed outwardly in baptism. In many cases it is only a ritual or ceremony. That is why there is so much barrenness in many who are called Christians. Baptism is a testimony and not a ceremony. Unless we are taught this we live very poor Christian lives. Unless our sins are buried and

forgotten, we cannot have real peace. Otherwise we are going to be haunted by the memory of sins committed.

At the time you sinned perhaps you said, "I will never do it again". You may try to forget your sins by eating and drinking, and others may say sin does not matter, for we do not come into the world again and again, so let us eat and drink and be merry. A day is coming, however, when you will feel miserable. Every memory of your sin will torment you. You may try to smile but that won't help you. You will still be restless and depressed day by day. You will say: 'After all, what is there in this world?' We must be purified from our sins, and that is why our Lord died and was buried. Today you can be freed from every memory of sin. He died to take away our condemnation. He died that we may die to our sinful nature.

Just as cancer has to be removed with all the surrounding tissues and muscles, so also by faith we have to take into us the power of death to die to our desires and thoughts. We do not die by *saying* so. I may say in the morning, 'I will not do it; I will not do it.' But the brain starts working: it says, 'It does not matter; it does not matter!' We go ahead and fall again. We cannot gain victory in our own power. As we receive into us the power of death so also we receive into us a new life called the power of His resurrection, which gives us a hunger and thirst for the things of eternity. In due course we are given ears to hear the Voice of God. When the Lord Jesus Christ told His disciples in plain language that He must suffer and die and rise again they became very sad (Matt. 16:21, 22; 17:5), and began to wonder why He had to suffer so much when He had such power. In fact Peter rebuked Him. "No, Lord, we will not allow you to suffer in this way."

After six days the Lord Jesus Christ took them to

a high mountain and was transformed before them. Then there came a Voice from heaven saying "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." God tells us by this means that if we want divine life to come into us, we must die to our old nature. We can never die to ourselves without His help. When the Lord died He died to help us to die to ourselves. The proof is that the more we obey Him the more the divine light is seen upon our faces. This kind of brightness does not come through soap or powder. It is a reflection of the glory of God which shines more and more as we obey God.

God says that if we want to hear His still small Voice, Somebody must die in our stead, for our sins, to take away our condemnation. God's justice must fulfil the divine law to help us to live a pure life. The Lord Jesus Christ rose again to pour into us new life and the power of His resurrection. It is only by that life that we can hear the still small Voice. It is, indeed, a *still small* Voice. It is not a human voice, and it is only by experience that we recognise it as we follow Him.

I testify to God's glory that I hear that still small Voice daily. I have been hearing it for the last thirty-seven years. I can go to my Lord at any time and anywhere and call upon Him. He speaks lovingly and says, "This is the way, walk ye in it." Follow the simple divine way to have power, and then all your questions can be answered day by day. Come upon your knees and write down on paper all your questions and say: "Lord, here are the questions. Please answer them. Show me the way and guide me today. Give me the message necessary for this person or that. Help me to live for Thy glory. Show me Thy will for the following matters and speak with me." Try this day by day.

In order to follow this simple way you have first to repent sincerely. Confess every sin without reservation.

Believe from the heart and say in simple faith: "The Lord Jesus Christ died in my stead for my sins, to take away my condemnation". Thank Him for dying for you. Say to Him: "Lord, I want to die to my habit of drink, of going to cinemas, etc. I want to die to other habits of bad temper or worrying, and other vices and weaknesses. Lord, bury my sins in Thy burial. Pour into me the power of Thy resurrection for every temptation and trial. Speak to me. Give me a message for my wife, or husband, friend or neighbour. Show me from Thy Word Thy hidden mysteries, and Thy plan for me for today, and for the future." Then you will find the Voice of God coming into your ears every day.

Chapter 2

TO HEAR IS TO OBEY

All God's people can hear the Voice of God. God does speak, and those who know the Lord Jesus Christ by experience ought to be able to hear His Voice daily for their problems, and according to their needs. He is a loving God, and if we have accepted Him as our personal Saviour, then we shall hear His Voice, according to John 10:27. But it is only in our spirit that we can hear His Voice and not in the flesh. Men try to hear the Voice of God with their ordinary hearing, but there is no gain in so doing though there have been a few occasions when I have heard the Voice of God with my physical ears However, we can hear His Voice in our spirit every day and many times a day.

We have a spirit, a soul and a body (Gen. 2:7). When God made man He breathed His own spirit into him. Bones, blood and muscles make the body; intellectual reasoning, emotion and will-power make the soul; conscience, intuition and worship are faculties of the spirit. These are the three main parts of man: body and soul and spirit. Because of sin death enters our spirit as well as our body. Every thought, word and deed we do against our God, we do by killing our conscience. If I want to tell a lie, my conscience pricks me, so, to tell a lie, I must kill my conscience. Unknowingly we bring death into our spirits, by our thoughts, words and deeds. Thus as sinners we have a dead spirit, a darkened soul, and a defiled body. We are unable to hear the Voice of

God, or feel His presence, or touch Him because of our dead spirit.

There was a man of God called Eli. He became dead spiritually because of sin. God spoke to the child Samuel during the night. Samuel heard the Voice of God, but Eli, the old priest, could not hear Him because of his spiritual deafness. Similarly, all of us have a *dead spirit* and a seared conscience. We do not know how to worship God nor do we know Him. We cannot know God nor His movements. We also have a *darkened soul* and therefore we misuse our brains, and become haughty and proud and puffed up in our knowledge. We boast of our emotions and become stubborn in our wills, and then our *body* becomes *defiled*. Even though you may have a beautiful face others can see on it the marks of hatred, greed or hypocrisy.

When we receive into us the life of Jesus Christ again we undergo a threefold change. The love of God can only be poured into the same spirit. It cannot be put into my bones, blood or muscles. God is a spirit and before that pure life can come into my spirit God must cleanse me, purge me and purify me completely. We claim by faith His precious blood for our cleansing because His blood alone contains everlasting life. Our blood contains physical life. We can go on living only as long as our hearts are beating.

In paralysis there is no movement in the affected part of the body, even though the heart goes on beating. Some war casualties have lost many parts of their bodies all at the same time and yet they go on living. God declared a long time ago in Lev. 17:11, 'The life of the flesh is the blood'. The Lord Jesus Christ did not sin and He was perfectly holy, having been conceived by the Holy Ghost, and He could challenge His enemies: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (John 8:46). No

one dared to take up the challenge. That is why His blood has purchased for us everlasting life, and also saw no corruption (Ps. 16:10).

When a man dies, that very second his body starts to disintegrate, so men use ice, or spices to keep the body in better condition. But the body of our Lord saw no corruption, and in that same body He rose again. "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood hath eternal life." We receive that truth by faith, for by His blood we are cleansed and filled with His eternal life, and it is then and only then that we are able to feel the presence of God.

In this way we undergo a threefold change from a dead spirit, a darkened soul and a defiled body, to a quickened spirit, an enlightened soul and a cleansed body. Even though we cannot see the change in a man's spirit, yet we can see it in his face when he receives this new life. A man may be dark and ugly, with thick lips, but when the life of God comes into him his face becomes charming and attractive. There is attraction and beauty in those who receive that new life: a charm that does not come through physical or artificial means or education. Worldly people can adopt worldly ways to decorate themselves by wearing rich clothes and jewels. They imagine they look beautiful, but if we ask the neighbours what they think about them, they may not answer openly, but we can tell that they think them vain, haughty, ugly and hypocritical. Is this not true? But God gives a different colour and beauty, and we do not require worldly possessions for that glory.

In this new life we find a proportionate work going on in the body, the soul and the spirit, when we are indwelt by the Spirit of God. Then we can hear His Voice daily, saying: "This is the way, walk ye in it. My son, be careful, take heed. My child, come unto Me; let Me

show you something: let Me teach you something." Sometimes when we are fast asleep we wake up suddenly as if we heard a Voice calling to us. This has been my experience many times. I have been fast asleep and have heard Someone call me by my name clearly. When I woke up I saw nobody there. I thought at first it was a dream or my imagination. When I went to sleep, again I heard the Voice and woke up. Sometimes this would happen for three times, and then would come a Voice saying: "My child get up, I want to speak to you." What a privilege, what an honour it is to receive God's Word day by day according to our need for ourselves and for our neighbours.

Before the Lord Jesus came into my life I was an atheist. I said: "There is no God!" I used to make fun of those who believed in God. I heard the Voice of God one day clearly, on the 16th of December 1929, saying: "My son, thy sins be forgiven thee." That is how I began my walk with God. The life of God came into me, and when that happened I underwent a three-fold change of the spirit, soul and body. I was given a *quickened spirit*, an *enlightened soul* and a *cleansed body*. Soon after that I began to read the book of Genesis in the month of January 1930. I found these words again and again in the same chapter: 'God said,' 'God said.' I found these words repeated 500 times and this very fragment was a blessing to me: 'God speaks, God speaks.' So I said, "Oh God speak to me, I want to hear Thy Voice. I have no ambition for any other experience. The longing of my soul is that you should speak to me and show me Thy way day by day". I believed like a child. Even though it may take some time to learn the lesson that God must speak, the fact remains that when He becomes real He does speak. A day came when I began to hear His Voice every day.

That is why I want you also to hear His voice and learn the lessons He wants to teach.

We are now going to see the second way of hearing His voice. First we saw how the heaven was opened at the time of Christ's baptism. Saul became Paul when he heard the Voice of God (Acts 9:3). He saw divine light and not sunlight. It suddenly began to shine round him very brightly. When he saw the light he fell down. You may not see such a light as Saul saw. But the same light can move into all of us without being seen.

Now when they take an X-ray photo you cannot see the rays. For ordinary photos, there must be either sunlight or some other light. But when you have your photo taken in the hospital, they take you into a dark room. You think the light will come but you just hear a click. You go home and your photo is shown to you. What happened? You wonder how they could see your insides in the dark, when next day the doctor says "Mr. M., look at your lungs in this photo"; for you could not see this outwardly. Divine light comes into us in the same way.

Many names are given to the Lord Jesus Christ in John 8:12. He is the Light of the world and He is the divine Light to show us our inward condition. What cannot be seen outwardly can be seen by divine light. The most experienced doctors cannot see your inward condition by looking at you. They can only find it by taking an X-ray photo.

In the same way divine light comes into us, and the sins which were hidden for so many years now come to light. It happened to me, though I did not see the light with these ordinary eyes. It was by reading that tiny fragment in John 3:3 'Verily, verily, I say unto you' that my eyes were opened. I had been saying about the Bible, "This book does not belong to me but to the

Europeans and Americans." But these words went on ringing in my ears, 'I say unto *thee*, I say unto *thee*.' I replied "Lord in that case, I am a sinner. I have uttered words of blasphemy against You. I tore the Bible in 1919." Then I knelt down and I saw many things from my past life which I had forgotten entirely.

This same thing happened to Saul. First he saw the light, then he knelt down. Then he heard the words, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Saul thought he saw something new. He thought he was serving God and was free from sin. He also thought he had a great zeal for God. But now he discovered he was God's enemy. Unknowingly he had been doing damage to the things of God. He was, no doubt, a sincere and God-fearing man, fully familiar with the Word of God, but he had never seen the divine light. He had been trying to follow God intellectually, but he had not seen his inward condition. Now he saw the whole light coming to him and cried as in Rom. 7:18. "To will is present in me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." But the Lord Jesus Christ said in a few words: "Unknowingly you have been doing damage to my work." Only the light coming into us can show us how much damage we are doing to God's work and to ourselves. Only the light of God can show us our true condition.

Just as the X-ray can show us the true condition of our body, so also the microscope is used to show the true condition of the blood.

There are some coughs that cannot be cured by cough mixtures. Doctors in the olden days used to think that the person was possessed by a demon when the cough could not be cured by treatment or cough mixture. When doctors began to examine the blood through microscopes they found out the cough was due to too many white corpuscles, and when proper treatment was given

the cough subsided. Patients might say: "What a wonderful doctor this is! I drank barrels and barrels of mixture but that never cured me. But this clever doctor just by giving me two injections has cured me". However, it was really the discovery of the microscope that brought success.

Let the light of God come into you fully. Do not hinder it. In the beginning it will be a very humbling experience. Saul was extremely proud of his knowledge and cleverness, but the light of God brought him right down upon his face. That man was carrying many papers in both arms, with authority from the priests allowing him to put into prison any believer he came across. His brain was full of ideas and his hands full of warrants. He was racing to capture the believers at Damascus, but both his ideas and the papers flew away. There he was in the dust and the Lord was saying to him, "You are wasting your time, money and energy. You are kicking against the pricks. You yourself will be hurt. Saul, do you think you can stop My work? You do not know how much damage you are doing to yourself."

As long as we live our own life, however sincere we may be, we are kicking against the pricks everyday and doing damage to ourselves, and becoming more and more deaf and blind spiritually. Saul was blind for three days that he might acknowledge his spiritual blindness before God. Instead of asking: "Who art thou Lord?" he might have asked other questions such as you are asking in your mind now. The Lord answered: "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." The name *Jesus* means, He shall save His people from their sins! The Lord said to him: "When you hate and persecute my people you are doing it to Me, but I am the Saviour. Even though you hate My name and blaspheme it, yet I love you, Saul. Even for you I shed My blood and gave My life."

The Lord is saying this same thing to you. You may know all His names and respect Him, but the question is: Has He forgiven your sins? Has He delivered you from your sinful nature? Has He come to live in you?

By way of example, there is a very clever, wonderful doctor and people flock to him from great distances. When I say this to others, they may question me: "But has he cured you? Did you ever go to him?" If I were to answer "No, but my wife says so!" they will turn around and ask: "But what about you?" The Lord Jesus Christ says: "I am Jesus, I am the Saviour. I died for your sins." If you say He has become your Saviour, have you thanked Him for dying for your sins? Have you got the assurance that your sins are gone? Has He delivered you from your sinful nature? Has He come into you?

Saul replied to the Voice: "Lord! what wilt thou have me do?" The Lord asked him to go to Damascus where he would be told what he was to do. Even though he was well known he had first of all to obey God and do exactly what God told him. The Lord did not tell him many things personally (Acts 9:6). An unknown person was sent to him; Ananias, by name. He was an ordinary person and not an apostle. We do not know much about him. Those who are wealthy and in high positions want well-known persons to talk to them, and not ordinary people. "I want a man with a title to talk to me of spiritual things," they think. God says: "Humble yourselves!". If the Lord wanted He could have Himself explained to Paul all the way of Salvation, but He did not do that. He sent Ananias to explain to him. That was the Voice of God to him and Saul humbled himself and believed whatever Ananias told him. "Now I know this Wonderful Way", he thought, "My sins have gone. I have been persecuting Him who died for me." Then

he was baptised through Ananias. From that time onward he heard the Voice of God a number of times.

Through all his life and ministry, by listening to the Voice of God, Saul went on to do His will (Acts 16). The Lord began to work mightily in Galatia and Mysia, and when Paul wanted to go into Bithynia, the Spirit suffered him not. Then he asked, "Lord, can we stay in Galatia?" Then the Lord said, "No". The same with Mysia. Then came the Voice of God: "Come over to Macedonia". Though it was on the other continent, he obeyed. That is how the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ entered into Europe. Saul and those with him heard and obeyed and when trouble came in Acts 18:9, what a privilege it was to suffer for His name.

When you have to face any difficulty or hardship, or have enemies in the office or neighbourhood, then comes the Voice early in the morning or at mid-day; "Fear not, I am with thee." These words will strengthen you and encourage you and give you victory. How many times I have heard these words, "I am with thee," for the last thirtyseven years. This can be a daily experience and there is no need for you to be dejected and depressed and say, "Take away my life".

In Acts 27, the ship was in great danger, and the 276 people in the ship had no hope that they were going to live. They were afraid because of the terrible storm. They had cast out the tackling to lighten the ship, and the sailors even attempted to flee, but Paul stopped them. That night God had spoken to Paul: "Fear not Paul. Thou must be brought before Ceasar and lo! God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." This Voice of God brought faith. Outwardly it was impossible that they would be saved, and there was not the least hope left, but God had assured him that he and the 276 people were safe. Paul had eaten well and slept well. He was

not afraid, and now he encouraged the others to eat also.

A little trouble will take away sleep and no sleeping tablet can give sleep at such a time. But at such a time and in such circumstances, there comes the Voice of God, "Fear not, I am with thee." It is the consciousness of God's presence which gives us assurance that it is God's voice and not man's voice. First of all, God's presence is realized by praising God and reading His Word, and then we hear His Voice. If I find my faith increasing I know it is not man's voice, and by later experience we come to recognize the Voice more readily.

Sometimes when a husband goes far away and returns without informing his wife, the wife is able to recognize his return by merely hearing his cough inside the compound and says: "There is my husband". "Where is he"? somebody may ask her. She replies "I don't know exactly where he is, but I can hear his voice." If, however, a wife is not on good terms with her husband and someone asks her where he is, she will say, "I don't know", even though he is on the verandah!

If you want to hear the Voice of God, let the Lord Jesus Christ come and rule in your heart. Receive His divine light and do not be afraid to confess your sin. Remember He died for your sins. Accept Him as your loving Saviour, then speak to Him as your Friend day by day, for you can talk to him anywhere on any matter, and He will surely talk with you. Remember only this, when you hear His Voice, obey at once.

Chapter 3

THE MORNING STAR

Once we learn the secret of hearing the Voice of God, all our questions, no matter how difficult they are, are answered, and our problems, however complicated, are solved. Again we repeat, the Lord does speak. He is a loving God, a living Person whom we can hear and whose love we can experience.

There was a time in my life when out of ignorance and folly and pride I used to say: "There is no God", and also made fun of those who believed in God. Then one day, without my going to any meeting or anyone coming to speak to me, I heard the Voice of God speaking to me in my own room and I knew that it was God who was speaking to me. He changed my life forty years ago. Thank God that He has saved a sinner like me, and that I now have the privilege of hearing His voice every day. I can testify to His glory that He answers my questions and solves my problems day by day, however difficult they may be.

When I started reading Genesis in January 1930, I came across these words several times in every page, 'God said', 'God said'. It is repeated 558 times in the first five books of the Bible. I began to mark my Bible and said to myself, "If God is speaking, then I must listen", and as I read I prayed, "O God, my loving God, speak to me and help me now". What I am telling you, I am telling you from my own experience, not from other people's experiences. We can see as we study the

different portions of the Scriptures, how God came into the lives of many men and women of old, and enabled them to hear His Voice. God uses many different ways and circumstances to teach us to know His ways. May He teach each one of us the secret of hearing the still small Voice of God.

This secret is revealed to us from the passage in Matt. 17:5, in the words that came from heaven: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him". These words were spoken for the benefit of those disciples who were with our Lord Jesus Christ, when He was transfigured on the mount, that they might understand the privilege His children have of hearing His Voice again and again. Those disciples had seen many miracles performed by our Lord Jesus Christ for three long years, and had also heard Him preach. They had listened to Him attentively, yet when that Voice came from heaven: "This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him", they could not understand, at that time, what it meant. To them it was words and sounds only. They could not enjoy what God said.

On the other hand, something happened when Saul heard the Voice of God. When Saul and his companions were on the way to Damascus (Acts 9) these words came clearly to him: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" Now Saul's companions heard the Voice but not the words. It sounded like thunder to them. But Saul was able to ask, "Who art thou Lord?" The Lord replied, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest". Then Saul further asked Him, "What wilt thou have me to do?" Saul questioned God because he had heard His Voice, but to his companions the Voice seemed to be sound without words. They could not understand. This was the condition of the people in Matt. 17. They heard many

sermons which were quite simple, but they could not understand what their real meaning was.

On one occasion our Lord Jesus Christ said: "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees" but it so happened that day they had forgotten to take bread with them. In those days they had to carry their own food when traveling. The disciples thought that because they had forgotten to do so the Lord was warning them. Many a time, they could not understand what He meant. In the same way you may be hearing many sermons but the words do not become your daily experience. In many cases they enter by one ear and go out through the other. We appeal to you not to give up till you learn to hear and understand when the Lord speaks to you. It is only when you learn this that your lives will become transformed. You will find your burdens lifted, your eyes opened, your fears and doubts cleared and all the enemy devices defeated. It is a wonderful thing to hear the Voice of the Lord.

Now in Matt. 16 our Lord Jesus puts two questions to His disciples in vs. 13-15. The first question is, "Whom do men say I the Son of man am?" It is for a purpose that a second question was put by our Lord Jesus Christ. It was to show them the secret of hearing the Voice of God. In answer to the first question the disciples replied, "Some say you are John the Baptist and some say that you are Jeremiah or Elias". The second question He put to them was, "What do *you* say about me?" Straightway Simon Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God". The Lord Jesus Christ answered: "Simon, don't get excited thinking that you have understood Me. Flesh and blood have not revealed this to you, but My Father which is in heaven." Peter could have told Him that he had seen all His

miracles during the three years he was the Christ, or he could have said it was because of His sermons that he knew, but our Lord Jesus Christ said: "Flesh and blood have not revealed. . . . It is not these that give you this revelation, viz. my miracles and my sermons. Simon, unknown to you, some divine light has been brought into you to let you know about Me."

Remember that you cannot hear the Voice of God without divine light. This is the first step if you want to know clearly and definitely the Voice of God. The light of God will come into you and it will go on shining brighter day by day (Pro. 4:15). That light may come into you like a tiny ray, but it will become brighter and brighter as you obey Him. Without divine light you cannot know, or see or hear God.

In 2 Peter 1:16-21 again Peter testifies how our Lord Jesus Christ had become so real to him. We read in Matt. 17:1-7, that our Lord took Peter, James and John on to a high mountain and was transfigured before them and His garments began to shine brightly, brighter than the mid-day sun. Then the Voice came from heaven: "This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him". Peter testified in his letter that he was not following cunning fables. On the mountain top they had seen the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and had heard His Voice, and that glory and that Voice had changed them completely (2 Peter 1:18).

Peter says: "Don't think we were the only people who have had the privilege of hearing God's Voice. You may say in your heart: 'Peter, it was your privilege to be on the mountain top and see His glory and transfiguration. What about men like us? How can we hear His Voice and see His glory. It may have been true in that period, but men like us of this period cannot hear

His voice.'" The answer is in the verse following (2 Peter 1:19) "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in the dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" Peter says there that if you really receive by faith the Word of God in your heart, the Word coming into you will become the shining light to let you see for yourself that God is light. That is the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In God's Word first we see ourselves as we are, then we see God in His true glory and love.

Many people get frightened when they see their true condition, and they think: 'No, no, I am a sinner and I want to be perfect. However I am not like my neighbour or brother or sister. I may tell a lie, but not often; I may take bribes, but I don't ask for them. People come and put the money into my pocket. I am not so bad after all."

In the eyes of the Lord, any sin of any kind is equally bad. One defiling touch in a wound could bring death. One tiny germ can bring death to a whole family.

You will find that when a person has a cold the whole family will get a cold. Even though you put your handkerchief to your nose when you sneeze to prevent the cold spreading, yet somebody else gets it.

Sin of any kind is easily destructive, horrible, and terrible. Only the light of God that comes into us delivers us from the damage caused by our thought, word or deed, and the very same light shows the glory, beauty and majesty of our living Saviour. When men uncover our sins they do so to put us to shame, but the light of God uncovers our sins to help us to confess them and have them cleansed away. We have the assurance of prophecy that we do not have to go on the mountain-top to see His

glory. Anywhere, wherever we are, there we can see His glory and beauty. This is possible only when divine light comes into us, and we receive in our spirit the Word of God.

If you want to receive the light of God, then first of all believe from your heart that the Bible is the true Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation. Even though we cannot understand what we read sometimes, it still remains the Word of God. It can never change. It is not of any private interpretation, holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Hear and read the Word of God with respect, reverence and faith and go on saying step by step: "Lord speak to me from Thy Word". That is how you can learn to hear the Voice of God.

I was convinced at the first reading of the Bible, that it was the Word of God. In my B.A., I read the books of different scholars but I never saw a book like this. When I read the first chapters of the Gospel of Matthew I said, "No man, no scholar from any part of the world can write like this. Only God can write in this special way." So I said, "Lord, I respect this book, this is Thy Word. Kindly teach me and speak to me through its pages. Even though I may not understand everything in the beginning, Lord, I will never doubt Thy Word. Do take Your own time and teach me the meaning of Your Word, either now or even of it takes one or two years. I will not worry You. I want You to speak daily according to my need." Then I found the light of God coming in brighter and brighter day by day. On the one hand, I saw my inward corruption, but on the other hand I saw His abundant grace to forgive me and wash me, and how He has made every provision to help me daily in my need.

"This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased,

hear ye Him." These words which the disciples heard at that time I found very hopeful, and believed them. At first I thought that by having Bible knowledge I would become more righteous, but then I discovered that it is neither knowledge, nor signs nor miracles that can make me righteous. Righteousness comes only by hearing the Voice of God. Before going to bed I used to pray, "Lord, tell me please, did my life today please Thee? Tell me if I made any mistakes and have grieved Thee by thought, word or deed. If I have done something wrong, Lord show it to me." He showed me, I confessed it and my Lord forgave me, and said to me; "I am well pleased with thee, go". Straightaway I would go to bed, and have a nice sleep. But if I had done something wrong and had not confessed it, I would find it hard to sleep. I would toss this way and that way, till at last I would go on my knees again and say: "Yes, Lord, I am sorry. It was my fault. I have grieved Thee. Kindly forgive me. I believe in the efficacy of the precious blood. Lord, forgive me." Then He would say to me, "My child go to bed again. I am well pleased with thee." Now I am happy every day.

It will happen to you also in the same way, given the same conditions. I learned to say day by day: "Now Lord, will you kindly show the way for me today? I am helpless, show me clearly what Thou art expecting of me. Tell me where to go, and what to say". Having found the plan, I would obey at once. When night came I would ask the same question upon my knees again. "Lord, has my love given you full satisfaction. Art Thou satisfied? Speak to me, are You fully satisfied?"

In my school days, if I scored high marks, say 600 marks or 60%, I would say to all my friends, "I have passed" and I would show the results to my father. He

would say, "What? only 60%? What have you been doing? You have wasted your time." I was satisfied that I had passed, but my father was not, and said: "You must get 95%".

Is God satisfied with you? When He is satisfied the Voice comes "My son, my daughter, I am well pleased with thee. Now go to bed." I found it so helpful daily in all my ways. I don't want the satisfaction of friends or neighbours. I believe my loving Saviour has undertaken for me and helped me. He is ready to forgive me and restore me.

First of all, He comes unto us like the Morning Star (2 Peter 1:19), "the Bright and Morning Star" (Rev. 22:16) (Num. 24:17). Read also Isaiah 60:3. Christ is the Bright and Morning Star. Have you ever lived in villages? You will find most farmers are not governed by clocks or watches. Whenever they go to the field early in the morning, or when they want to travel early in the morning, they are governed by the Morning Star and say, "Now it is time, I must get up and go". They find their direction also by the same Morning Star.

You will find in many cases when you want to get up, the body says, "My dear master, will you please let me lie down for a few minutes? I am tired". Then the head, stomach and knees begin to hurt, as if to say: "Master, I am very tired. Please let me sleep. Last night I did not sleep properly. My neighbours troubled me, and my stomach troubled me too. My dear master have mercy on me. Let me stay here for a while." Then when you get up your journey seems longer, for the sun is very hot and the night is far spent.

The Lord Jesus Christ comes to us as the Bright and Morning Star, and even though in the beginning we may know some darkness, remember nobody becomes perfect

as soon as they are born again. We have many difficulties and problems to face in the beginning. We see darkness around us, but the Morning Star tells me, "My child, do not look at the darkness. After one or two hours the sun will be getting up", and true enough, we find the sun shining upon us after a few hours. The Morning Star enables us to overcome all our worries and doubts without any human help, and we shall be able to find the way. The more we obey, the more light we will receive.

In the beginning you cannot understand so many things. I read the Bible more than one hundred times and then at last began to see some meaning, but now I know what these words mean: 'In the beginning', Gen. 1. I did not know at first what they meant, and often went to sleep while reading. After many years these same chapters or verses or passages have become new to me. That is the light of God shining upon the path more brightly, provided we receive the Word of God as the Word of God and make it a practice to stay upon our knees till God speaks to us.

In the beginning do not ask God many questions but only one thing: "Lord, are you satisfied with my life? I come to you only with one question. I have not come with any need. But only this 'Lord, is my life giving you full pleasure? Are you fully satisfied with my deeds and words?'" Then wait patiently and don't worry God for an answer. He is our Creator. Be reverent before Him. Don't say to Him, "Lord I am a very busy man. If you don't speak to me within five minutes I won't talk to you. I will go away. I am willing to give you seven minutes, but not more." Say rather, "Lord take Your own time", and I am sure He will speak to you.

The Lord told his disciples in Matt. 16:21 that He would suffer many things of the elders and chief priests

and be killed and raised again the third day. All this He told them before taking them to the mountain and being transfigured before them. He explained to them in plain language that it was for the sake of their sins that He was to suffer, be killed and rise again. Peter even took him aside and rebuked Him. Then after six days, the Lord took him on to a high mountain, and these words came, "Hear ye *Him*!" It is not through sermons, or the knowledge of Hebrew literature or Greek philosophy that we know the way of the cross. The Voice said, "Hear ye *Him*". Hear *His* Voice daily, hear it fully, and then you will know the full meaning of His suffering, death, burial, resurrection and glory. A man who tries to understand spiritual mysteries by human wisdom will be confounded and confused and perplexed. So listen to His Voice as you begin the day. Wait patiently and quietly and say, "Lord speak to me morning, noon, and night. Speak to me from Thine own Word". Wait till He says, "Yes, my son, I am well pleased; go".

For this purpose you must welcome the living Lord into your heart. Only then will He speak to you. He cannot come and live in your heart till you ask Him to come in and He forgives your sin. I have travelled for many years to many places and visited many poor homes, some even small huts. Sometimes we go unexpectedly and as strangers, and they say, "Sir, wait for a while, while they take up the broom and sweep the hut. Then they will spread a mat or a blanket. Sometimes women will spread their sarees. Then only they say, "Come in, Sir".

How are you going to welcome the Lord Jesus Christ? He will come only into a pure heart. He Himself will undertake to cleanse your heart with His precious blood. He will come and stay in your heart for eternity and not

only for a few days. Then you can speak to Him and tell Him all that has happened, and you can go out and tell others what has happened to you, till your face shines with the joy of His presence.

Chapter 4

GOD'S MOUTHPIECES

"And thine ear shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, . . ."

This verse surely refers to the Voice of God. Our constant prayer should be that we may learn to hear that Voice plainly and clearly, for it is only by hearing His Voice that all our questions can be answered and all our problems solved day by day. It requires faith and patience to hear the Voice of God. God does speak, though very few believers enjoy the privilege of hearing His Voice daily and clearly. In Psalm 29 it is plain that God's power is fully manifested when His Voice comes to us (vs. 4-5). The Voice of God breaks the cedars (v. 7). The Voice of God divides the flames of the fire (v. 8). It shakes the wilderness. These words are repeated to show the great power of God that is available for your life and mine.

We have already seen how this lesson was taught to Elijah the prophet. In I Kings 19:12, he heard the still small Voice of God. He had seen God's great power come down in the form of fire, consuming the sacrifice, and then sending the rain, and yet we find him sitting under the juniper tree disheartened and in despair. In v. 4 he is almost saying that he does not want to live any more. All of us feel discouraged, depressed and downcast at some time or the other. All of us find our burdens too heavy for us at times. We hear of death, troubles and other calamities; we hear our enemies say

things against us. All these unhappy situations make us dejected and depressed, and we all come to the juniper tree some time or other. But when Elijah heard the still small voice in Kings 19:12 his burden lifted. His desire to die left him and all his questions about God disappeared. He learned a new secret. God made His mind very clear to him, and after all those years of his ministry he learned that God's ways are not man's ways. Once you learn that secret, then whatever may be your burden or problem, you will come out victorious. We must learn the secret of hearing God, and of knowing His ways.

How can these experiences of hearing God's voice become our experience also? Paul, the Apostle, learned this lesson at the very time of his conversion. We shall see something more of this as we study the Apostle's life. In Acts 9, the Lord Himself met him and spoke to him, and when Saul put this question: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do," the Lord told him to go into the city, though, if He had wanted to He could have told him everything on the spot. He appeared to Saul and let him see His glory, brighter than the mid-day sun, and asked him so clearly: "Saul, why dost thou persecute Me? I am Jesus". Having said and showed so much why did He not give further instructions then and there? Our Lord was showing him clearly that He does not always appear and speak in the same way. So many of us get troubled because we limit God to our way of thinking. We cannot limit Him. He has every right to speak to us as He thinks best. By faith we have to believe what He says. The first step was that Saul became Paul. If he wanted to hear further from God he must obey. He was told to go into the city of Damascus where it would be told him what he should do. You must obey whatever God has shown you. I tell you again that un-

less you are born again you cannot hear the Voice of God. Those who have received the gift of eternal life must have heard His Voice sometime, somewhere. Have you obeyed that Voice, or did you argue with God?

Many years ago we were having an open-air meeting. Afterwards we went to a hotel for a cup of tea. While sitting down I heard the Voice of God: "Go to that corner and give the man sitting there a gospel." I said in my heart, "Just look at his moustache." Because of his moustache I was sure he would not hear the gospel. I thought it a waste of time to speak to such a man. But the Voice came to me again and again: "You go to him; you go to him." Half shrinking I went over and gave him a gospel with trembling hands. "What is this?" he asked. "Sir, it is the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ", I answered, and he exclaimed: "Gospel! I want a full Urdu Bible. For two years I have been longing for someone to give me a full Urdu Bible". With joy in my heart I replied: "I do not have one with me now, but if you will give your address I shall bring one to you". The next day I took a Bible and went to his home and also explained to him how to read it. He was so thankful, so hungry for the Word of God, he not only paid for the Bible but gave me plenty of cakes and tea and I had the privilege of talking to him of salvation. If I had gone according to my own wisdom I would not have spoken to him or given the gospel. It is only as I obeyed that I began to see how God works.

God does not tell us too much at the beginning. He just says very small sentences. But as we obey Him step by step He will tell us many things. Do not wait for a long message when God speaks. Just obey as much as He tells you. When Saul obeyed the Voice and came to Damascus, unknown to him God had prepared another

servant to go to him. Ananias came to Saul and began to talk to him (Acts 22 : 12). It seemed to be the voice of Ananias that was talking to Saul. But in reality it was the Voice of God. In Acts 9:10-15 Ananias at first refused to go to Saul, but God prepared him to do so. Saul never knew how God had prepared Ananias and sent him. When he came to Saul he gave him the Lord's message. They were not the words of Ananias but the words of the Lord Jesus Christ who was speaking to Saul, and he became Paul. Ananias told him that he had been accepted by God, and he believed it. He could have doubted it and said: "I have done so much harm all these years to the Lord Jesus Christ. How many disciples I have dragged to prison and other places and used words of blasphemy against the Lord Jesus Christ. How can such a horrible sin be forgiven so easily?"

Paul never got tired of admitting that he was the chief of sinners. When the message came through Ananias in a simple way from the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul believed. "My sins are gone", he could say. "My Lord whom I persecuted has chosen me, received me and accepted me. Not only has He forgiven me but He has made me His witness. He wants me to see His glory and hear His voice daily." Few believe the words of God. Saul could have said, "Ananias, how do you know that my sins are gone?" but without any argument he accepted, because he believed in the Lord Jesus Himself, and that He had spoken to him through Ananias. The Lord does speak thus through His messengers, servants and witnesses. You will know in your conscience that the words spoken by somebody somewhere were not ordinary words.

Some years ago I went to a house to meet a certain young man. I was talking for some time, when suddenly his friends said to me: "While we are preparing some

food you go on talking". Then I saw the young man's face. It was the first time I had met him. I heard a Voice in me, "You say this to this young man", and I thought: "I don't know this young man, but I know he will be very angry". Again the same words came to me: "Tell him that if he does not leave that sin he will go to hell". I told him, "If you don't leave that sin you will go to hell". In the meantime one of his friends brought coffee, and I was glad because he saved me from speaking further to that young man. Next morning I got a telephone call, and an old man said, "Can I come and see you?" I replied, "Please come straightway". A very tall man walked into my room and with tears he said to me, "I have come personally to thank you for speaking to my son last night". I replied, "Sir, I said nothing to him". He told me, "That young man to whom you spoke is my son. He has been living in sin for two years with somebody. He left home and went away. Both my wife and I were broken-hearted. I do not know what you said to him, but after meeting you he came to us and fell at our feet and asked us for forgiveness". That was the first time I had met that man. I did not know him. Neither did I know about his private life. Yet the Lord spoke to me clearly and insisted that I say to him: "If you don't leave that sin you are going to hell". In this way the Lord uses His messengers and witnesses to speak to those whose hearts He has prepared. Sometimes they are words of comfort or words of guidance. Please listen attentively when God speaks to you, and do not get angry with the preacher when God speaks through him.

Some years ago a young man came to a meeting after much persuasion. His mother had been asking him constantly to do so but he had always refused in the past.

One evening without telling anyone he came to a meeting. After the meeting was over he went home and was very angry with his mother. He asked her, "Why did you go and tell that preacher all about me". She told him, "My son, I have never told a word to anyone about you." The boy refused to believe her and said, "No, no, you you must have done so. I was sitting in a corner and the preacher pointed his finger at me. I left that corner and went and sat in a different place and again he pointed his finger. Then I went and sat at the back. Again he pointed his finger at me. Whatever he said was about me and for me and me alone. How could he have known about me?" "No, my son, I did not tell him anything", the mother replied. "God is speaking to you. Do repent of your sins and be forgiven" He repented and what a great change took place. He became the Lord's true witness.

The Lord does speak to all of us, as He knows best. So if you feel restless in the meeting, even before the preacher points his finger at you, say in prayer, "Lord, is this Your voice or man's voice? If it is Thy voice I accept and humble myself. Have mercy on me". You will find that many a time the Lord will use somebody else to speak to you, so do not expect Him always to speak to you directly.

Words like those in Acts 19:9 were not always coming to Paul. But the voice of God came to him when he was discouraged and the attack of the enemy was very strong, saying, "Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace. I am with thee and no man shall hurt thee; I have much people in the city". It is only as we become His mouthpieces and witnesses that we hear His Voice at different times. Many of us are afraid to say a few words about God's saving and keeping power. Every

believer is a witness of God like the man born blind who was given sight and who said boldly: "Even though I may be persecuted, one thing I know, I was born blind, but now I see".

Is it too much to say this to your college friends? Most of us have testified at sometime in a meeting that we are born again, but have you been a witness to His saving power before friends, relations, co-workers and fellow-students? Even if they were to mock at you, you can truthfully say, "One thing I know, I was a sinner, but the Lord Jesus Christ has forgiven my sins. This happened for the first time in a certain place on a certain day. One thing I know, I have found peace". Even though they may not accept what you say, go on testifying peacefully and joyfully. Then one day when you are surrounded by the enemy and are feeling lonely, there may come to you the Voice of God: "Be not afraid, I am with thee; fear not, for I am with thee. Go on speaking in My name". It is such a testimony that will qualify us to hear the Voice of God.

I know this by experience because many a time I was afraid of faces. In the early days I could not speak one word. I was a stammerer and stutterer and I had to struggle to speak at all. It was very embarrassing, but the Voice of God said: "Fear not, I will touch your tongue. You are my mouthpiece. I will use you". I knew one thing so I said: "I know my sins are gone and that I have true peace. Have you got that peace?" Only these few words were spoken in liberty and afterwards I heard these words, "I am with thee; I am with thee!" Go on testifying to His saving and keeping power and He will surely speak to you.

God told Paul the Apostle to go to Jerusalem. He told him also that he had to go to Rome afterwards.

On the way to Jerusalem, at Caesarea one prophet Agabus took Paul's girdle and bound his own hands and feet and said, "Thus saith the Holy Ghost, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle" (Acts 21:11). When they heard this his friends began to try to dissuade him from going to Jerusalem. The prophet never said, "Do not go to Jerusalem". He never said that by going there Paul would be bound. When his friends pressed him to cancel his journey Paul told them, "What mean ye to weep and break my heart? I am ready not only to be bound but also to die." Then they agreed: "God's will be done". Paul knew full well that it was God's will for him to go to Jerusalem and then on to Rome.

When he was taken to Rome as a prisoner, there was a great storm and they were about to perish. As we have seen earlier, with their own hands they were throwing away the ship's tackling. The ropes were cut and the sails were lowered. There was no hope of living through the storm. Then once more the Lord appeared to him and confirmed His will (Acts 27:24). "Paul, fear not. I am with thee. Thou must be brought before Ceasar. I have given all these on the ship to thee. They also are going to be saved". While others were crying and weeping with fear saying: "We are perishing, we are perishing", Paul assured them that they were going to be saved. He told them, "There stood by me the angel of God whose I am and whom I serve, saying: Fear not Paul. Thou must be brought before Ceasar and lo! God hath given thee all those that sail with thee". As God had spoken it came to pass. All were saved. How did Paul hear the voice of God? It was because he was certain of the will of God. God's will for him that he should go to Rome. That is why his ears were sensitive to the

Voice of God. It is only as you are in the will of God that you can hear the Voice of God speak to you again and again.

The Voice of God comes as confirmation. Do you want to hear the Voice of God clearly? Then learn to find and do God's will every day even in the smallest matter. If anybody will ask me: "What is your highest privilege as a Christian?" I would reply that knowing and doing God's will is my highest privilege. Those who know God's will and are doing it, find it through God's Word, His messengers or other circumstances.

The Greeks in John 12:21 came from far and desired to see our Lord Jesus Christ. They sent their request through Philip who approached Andrew and they both went to Jesus and said: "These Greeks want to see you." We find the answer of Jesus in vs. 24, 28, 30. These men came in all sincerity to see Jesus. Our Lord told them, "You want to see me for only a few minutes. But it is possible for you to see Me forever and hear Me always. By merely looking at Me and seeing the miracles you are not going to get lasting satisfaction. I want to teach you a secret. If you can see your death in Mine and live your new life in My resurrection life, then you will really see Me daily, and hear My Voice." This is the meaning of verse 23. · How is this done? The answer is in v. 24: Take a grain of wheat and sow it in the ground and water it. In a year's time you will be able to harvest five thousand grains. Go on sowing those grains of wheat and reaping them for five years. Then the total grain from the original one grain will be more than enough to fill a whole goods train. Our Lord was inferring that just as one grain yields many grains, so by His death, burial and resurrection, He would produce many sons like Himself (1 John 3:2).

When our Lord comes the second time we shall see Him as He is and shall be like Him. When going to heaven we shall see our Lord Jesus Christ, and around Him many more like Him. The Greeks were saying, "We want to see Jesus." Our Lord answered them: "You want only to see Me, but I want to make you like Me. First of all, however, you have to die in My death and become a partaker of My resurrection and finally you will be like Me and will hear My Voice for eternity."

Our Lord prayed in John 13:28. "Father glorify Thy Son, then many shall see Me in Thy full glory and become like Me." Then came the Voice. It is only as we glorify His name through all our deeds that we hear His Voice. Pray by faith, "Lord! I want to live such a life that Thy Name may be highly glorified through me. Tell me, Lord, is Thy Name being glorified through me by my plans, words and action?" Generally we pray, "Lord, You must hear my prayer. If you will answer I will give you Rs. 10. If I pass in first class I will give you Rs. 10, but only Re. 1 if I pass in third class" This is our condition. Rather pray only that He be glorified either through your success or your failure, by life or death, or health or sickness, or poverty or prosperity. "Lord, keep me where I can glorify Thy name. I do not seek nor desire anything else." Then I assure you, you will hear the Voice of God. There will come a Voice from heaven to tell you what to do. God does speak, but you have got to fulfil His conditions before you can hear His Voice.

Chapter 5

UNQUESTIONING OBEDIENCE

Do we believe with all our hearts that by learning that secret of hearing and discerning the Voice of God, we can have all our questions answered, and all our problems solved?

We read in Num. 7:89 that the Voice of God came only when the work of the tabernacle was finished by Moses and had been carried out according to the pattern shown to Moses by the Lord on the mount. In Exodus 40:34 we read that God's glory filled the Tabernacle, and His Voice began to be heard from between the cherubim in the most Holy Place. When any man wanted to find the will of God he had to come to the High priest, and the High priest had to hear the Voice of God speaking from the most Holy Place. Now the Lord Jesus Christ is our everlasting heavenly High Priest, and those who accept Him as their personal Saviour are indwelt by Him. Their bodies become the temple of the Holy Spirit.

There is no need now for anyone to go to an earthly High Priest. Man can speak to God Himself through the Lord Jesus Christ, the High Priest, and get an answer and hear the Voice of God daily. But one thing is necessary. All those among us who desire to hear the Voice of God, must be sure that they are indwelt by the Spirit of God. We have already seen that when the Spirit of God comes into us we undergo a three-fold change. As sinners we have a dead spirit, a darkened soul and a defiled body. God is Holy and before He

can come into us. He has first of all to cleanse us by the precious Blood of Christ from every inward defilement caused by thought, word or deed. Just as in the Old Testament period men could see the glory of God resting on the Tabernacle, so also those who are born again are conscious of the presence of God in them and with them always. That experience cannot come by human activity. They are conscious of the divine presence of the One who has the right to guide and to help them.

It is only sin that will prevent us from feeling His presence, but sin can be forgiven again and again and cleansed by His precious blood.

When our Lord Jesus Christ began His public ministry the heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit came down as a dove and the voice from heaven was heard. He came into this world that heaven might be opened for us and the Holy Spirit might rest upon us, to guide us in all things and to enable us to hear the Voice of God every day. There are different ways in which that Voice can be heard and obeyed. God is a spirit, and His Voice is also spiritual. Thus you cannot feel the Spirit of God by your hands or feet. We feel Him in our spirit and see Him, and hear Him. His is a spiritual Voice, and though there are occasions when God's Voice can be heard by our physical ears, these occasions are few. Our spirit, however, can register the Voice of God clearly day by day, but to hear that voice we have to be sure our spirit is purified (Matthew 5:8, Acts 10:14). "Holiness, without which no man can see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14).

We have seen how the Lord chose to speak through different witnesses. In Acts 8, God's witness was called Philip. The Lord used him mightily in a place called

Samaria. The Samaritans were hated by the Jews, and despised by them, but Philip went as a witness to preach the Gospel to a people who were despised. God began to use him mightily. Unless he had been a transformed person, he would never have gone to Samaria, for it required divine love to compel him to go to those people. But God used his ministry mightily in that city. Then suddenly came God's command: "Arise and go south". He obeyed God straightway. He was being much used of the Lord in Samaria, and his ministry and service were very much needed there. He could have said in his heart: "The work I am doing is such a great work, and it is God's work. All these new believers have to be strengthened and built up in the Lord. How can I leave such an important work and go to a lonely desert?"

God never explained to him why he should leave Samaria and go into the desert. As we have seen already God never tells us too much at one time, but we, as human beings, are curious to know things beforehand. That is our human weakness, but God only speaks a few words at a time. He does not give a big programme to begin with. God told Philip: "Arise and go to Gaza," without giving him the reasons for the need for him to go there. Yet as he obeyed he found the reason.

This is a primary condition for hearing the Voice of God: you must be willing to go and do what God tells you to do without argument. You will find very often that your mind comes in the way. You will begin to question and argue with God. If so, it will take much longer for you to hear His Voice, but if you get your ear sensitive and clear, you will hear the Voice of God clearly.

Some years ago, as I was praying at midnight before lying down, there came the Voice of God saying, "Go out

with the Gospel". My reaction was, "Who will be out at this time of the night?", but I put on my coat and took the gospels and went out. I found two men walking ahead of me. I asked them, "Will you kindly stop for a minute?" They asked: "Why do you want us to stop?" I replied, "Just as I was about to lie down I heard the Voice of God and He told me: 'Go to the right side, go to the right.' I have a message for you two". One of the two young men said to me, "You are quite right. God has sent you for my sake. I am tired of life. Give me God's message." I had the joy of showing him the way of Salvation.

I have found by experience that as I go on obeying without questioning, the Lord goes on giving me further instructions. This is what happened to Philip. He went into the desert. There he saw a man travelling in a chariot, but even then God did not tell him why He had asked him to go. Philip could have thought, 'It looks as if I am running like a thief after this chariot!" but he never questioned God. In Acts 8:30, Philip ran to the chariot and heard the man reading from the 53rd chapter of Isaiah.

Herein lies the secret. Whatever the Lord tells you to do, do it quickly and joyfully. One day I saw a man walking in front of me. God told me, "Go and stop him". I went and put my hand on his shoulder and he stopped and asked me, "Why have you stopped me. I am a very busy man". He started to walk on. Again I stopped him, and he said the same words, adding: "Why are you wasting my time like this?" I replied, "It is because the Lord has sent me". The man retorted: "I don't believe it. Don't waste my time any further". Once more I went after him and stopped him entreating him: "Please stop a while." Then he replied,

"To be frank with you, I am tired of my life and I am on my way to commit suicide". Then I told him, "I am not stopping you from doing that. You can do it now or afterwards. You won't lose anything by giving me half an hour. Then you are free to go where you like to commit suicide. I promise you I won't stop you". So he agreed. We both went to a nearby park. I took my Bible and after a short prayer gave him the message. Again I prayed with him and told him: "Now you are free to go and commit suicide". But he replied, "My desire to commit suicide has gone. When can I see you again?" He visited me once or twice and was born again.

The secret is to obey the Lord implicitly. No matter what time of the day it is, whether it is midnight, or dawn, or the heat of the noon, a very clear and deep impression will be made by the Holy Spirit on your spirit to compel you to do or say something.

God never told Philip what to preach but we can see clearly that what he spoke and said was constrained by the Spirit. He went to the chariot and heard the Ethiopian read Isaiah 53. It was a wonderful prophecy of the Lord Jesus Christ. This prophecy was made in detail 750 years before the time of Christ. When he heard the Ethiopian reading the passage he knew why God had asked him to go on the road to Gaza. Straightway his spirit received the divine message and by the Holy Spirit he put the question to the Ethiopian, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" In this silent way the Lord puts His thoughts and words into us, and often we find that when we begin to speak, words flow like a stream. To his question the Ethiopian answered, "How can I, unless some man guide me?" (verse 31). He allowed Philip to get into the chariot and sit with him. If

Philip had asked the man to stop that chariot as soon as he came near, the man might have refused to do so, thinking that Philip might be a thief wanting to harm him.

In America many people stop passing cars for a lift, sometimes the car will stop and give the man a lift, sometimes not. Sometimes the man in the car may become suspicious and drive on without stopping. This could have happened to Philip, but he was not using human wisdom, but was obeying the instructions of the Holy Spirit. The Ethiopian himself stopped the chariot and invited Philip inside. "Please come and sit with me and explain this passage," he said. Then Philip explained the passage so clearly that he convinced him of the meaning and of the death of Jesus Christ for the sake of sinners. You find that as you obey God's Word that He will put His words into your mouths, according to His promise in Matt. 10:20, Luke 12:12; 21:15. Not only will you hear the voice of God leading you and guiding you step by step, but you will also find the Holy Spirit touching your lips and putting His own words needed for the person you meet.

I met a young man once in a railway station at midnight. I gave him a tract and Gospel and told him, "Don't delay, decide now for the Lord Jesus Christ". He replied, "I cannot decide now. I will think about it". I asked him, "Suppose you had lost Rs. 5, will you say 'I will look for it tomorrow or the day after?'" He questioned me, "Who told you I had lost Rs. 5?" I said, „No one. I did not know at all". The young man said, "Just now I went to the booking office and bought a ticket and took it and the change in a hurry but when I counted it I found I was short of Rs. 5. I went back and asked the booking clerk but he refused to listen. This is why I am upset at losing the Rs. 5". Now I had not known

anything about it. Just a few simple words had softened his heart and he received the message. In this way God will put the right word into your mouth for your friends and relations. Even though you do not hear the Voice of God clearly yet in a silent way the living Lord is pouring His words into your mouth to use you as His mouthpiece. Then you will be a source of inspiriation, strength, and joy to many people. What a joy it is to obey His Voice. Don't question. Don't argue with Him.

Many years ago I woke up at 4 a.m. and heard a party singing near the window. Those words came to me clearly: Isa. 33:17. "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty, they shall behold the land that is very far off". This happened for three mornings at 4 o'cock. I heard the party singing and heard the words. I thought the Lord was giving me the text for the message on Sunday morning. So on Sunday morning I gave a message on that text. On Monday morning also I did the same. I asked, "Lord, what is Your message to me from these words? You have been sending them to me for the last four mornings." Then the Lord told me to get ready to go to a far-off country. So straightway I applied for a passport. I believed that God had spoken to me to get ready even though I had had no invitation from anybody. In those days we had to apply at Delhi for a passage. Within a few days I got the reply that I was given a passage on a particular ship for a certain day. I had not yet received the passport but I believed that God had His heavenly plan for me. Normally it takes a month to get a passport. I saw God working and moving on my behalf and got it within a week.

In my quiet time I got the words, from Ezra 8:1 "In the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month." These words came to me very forcibly in my

quiet time. Again I prayed, "What is the meaning of these words to me?" The Lord told me, "I want you to be in London on 5th June 1946." So I went to Bombay and saw the ship's company. I asked them, "Is there any ship which arrives in London on 5th June?" They replied, "Yes, there is, Sir, but there is no vacancy on it." I went twice and asked, "Has anyone cancelled their passage?" They answered, "No, Sir. But another ship will be leaving next week and we can give you a passage on it." God had told me definitely that I was to be in London on the 5th June, and it was not certain that the next ship would reach there on that date. Anyhow I booked my passage on the second ship and we arrived in London on the 5th June but the first ship got in four days after we did, as their engine was out of order. The second ship was a fast ship and as I obeyed I got in at the right time.

Later a verse came to me in my quiet time from Zech 9:10 ". . . from sea even to sea . . .", The Lord told me, "You have to cross another sea and go further". I went to every shipping company and every air company and got the same answer, "No room". I believed that as God had spoken I was to find a way. One morning I was reading Isa. 43:16. "Thus saith the Lord which maketh a way in the sea and a path in the mighty waters." So I was certain I would get my passage and went to the shipping office and asked: "Sir, is there any chance for me today". The man replied, "Well, Sir, there is just this one possibility. If the High Commissioner can recommend your case you can get it. They usually do it for government servants". I decided to go and try. I went to the High Commissioner's office and the man there asked me, "Are you a Government servant"? I replied, "No sir, I am God's servant".

"That will do," he replied and I got the passage. When I got to New York I got a message that somebody in New York, Reuben Lawson by name, was waiting to see me. I had not seen him for many years. I had met him in 1930, and that too only for a short time. I had no idea as to his whereabouts for the last 10 years. How did he find out that I had arrived there? Anyway when I got off the ship there he was. He told me, "You have come to America because of prayer. I have been praying for somebody who knows Hindi because we want to record messages for those Indians who are in America. This morning I overheard one Mr. Chambers saying, 'Brother Bakht Singh is coming to New York'. That is why I have come to meet you". The very first day after landing I recorded a message. I had the privilege to record thirty messages; one per day, each message of a duration of thirty-five minutes. Till today they are being broadcast in South America.

I can say truthfully and with all humility that I have no desire to see any country, or city in any country, or to buy anything. I have but one desire and that is to be in His perfect will and to be used by Him as His witness. That is how God goes on working quietly day by day in us. If you are willing to be used by Him to show someone the way of salvation, or to comfort someone, or help someone, then you will find it easy to hear the Voice of God. You won't argue or question; whatever He commands you, whatever He says, you will obey. He will give you the message for the persons concerned: a heavenly plan for the right person. I can tell you so many stories to prove this and of the honour one has to hear God's Voice every day at every step.

Be willing to obey. Whatever He says that do without question. Have you obeyed His first call: "If any man

hear My Voice and open the door, I will come into him"? (Rev. 3:20). Make sure that the living Lord Jesus *has* come into you. A dead man cannot hear the Voice of God. If you are not born again you are dead spiritually. If God has not forgiven all your sins then you are deaf, dumb and blind spiritually. We appeal to you to first receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your living Saviour and Friend, and then by faith say daily: "Speak to me, Lord, lead me and help me day by day. O Lord, I want to live for Thee. Till you speak to me, I cannot be used by Thee. You can send me anywhere or keep me anywhere. I only want to be in Your will. Oh Lord, give me the privilege of sharing Your joy with somebody else." Then, as you listen, you will hear His glorious Voice, and as you obey you will be filled with His joy unspeakable, and will have the privilege of being guided by Him in every detail of life.